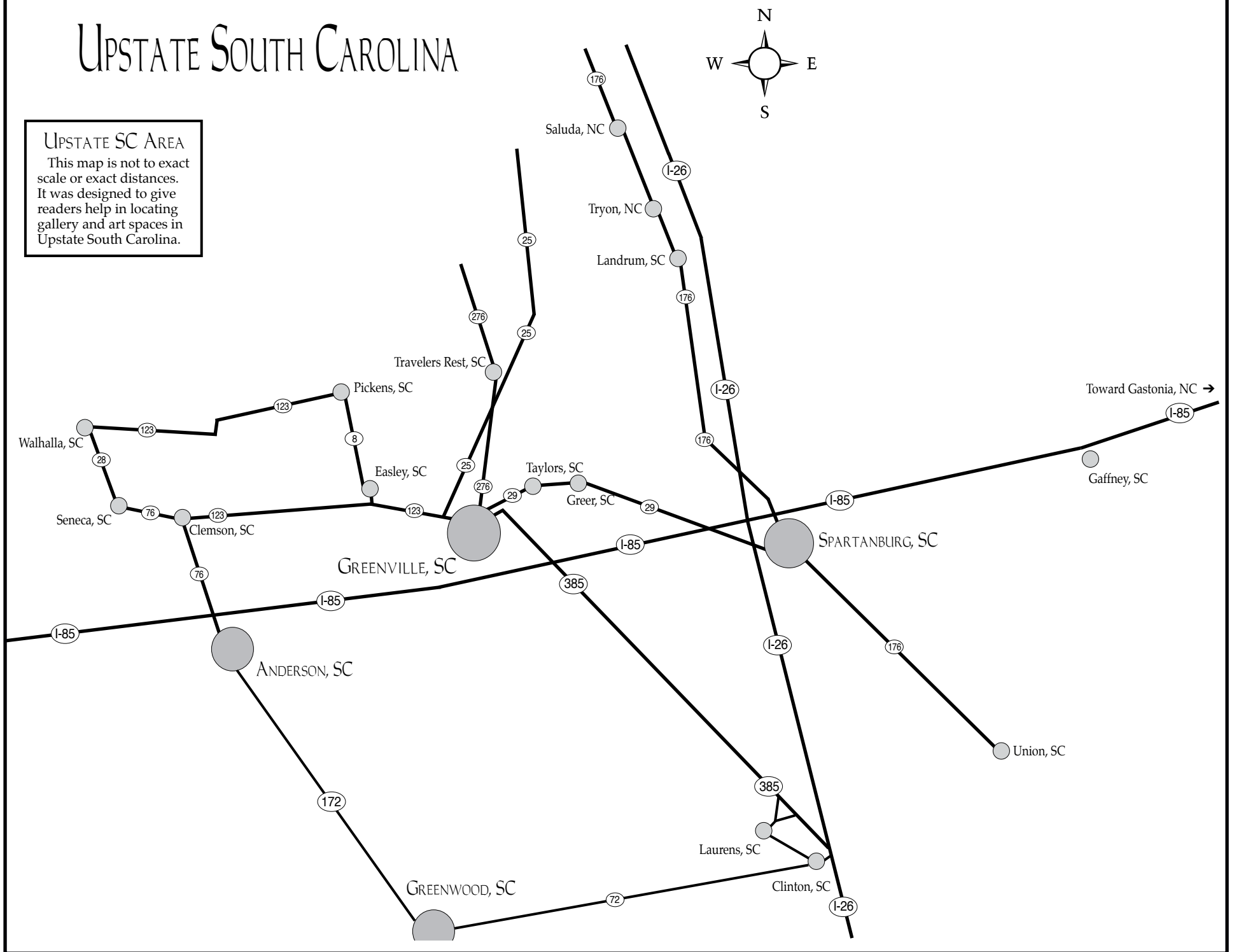


UPSTATE SOUTH CAROLINA

UPSTATE SC AREA

This map is not to exact scale or exact distances. It was designed to give readers help in locating gallery and art spaces in Upstate South Carolina.



Hampton III Gallery in Taylors, SC, Features Works by John Acorn

Hampton III Gallery in Taylors, SC, just outside of Greenville, SC, will present *John Acorn: 20th Century Man*, curated by Luke Delello, on view from Apr. 11 through May 31, 2025. A reception will be held on Apr. 12 from 1-3pm. A Coffee and Conversation will be offered on May 24, from 11am-noon at the gallery. A Panel Discussion and Documentary Screening will be held on May 9, from 4-5:30pm, at McMillan Pazdan Smith, 400 Augusta Street Suite 200 in Greenville, SC.

Hampton III Gallery will be hosting an exhibition of John Acorn, retired artist and educator currently living in Pendleton SC.

Acorn is considered one of the South's most progressive sculptors of the 20th century. In 1961 he received his MFA degree from Cranbrook Academy, then for 36 years (1961- 1997) he taught as a professor of sculpture and design in the College of Architecture at Clemson University, SC; upon retirement receiving the honor of Professor Emeritus. In 1998 the South Carolina Arts Commission honored him with the Elizabeth O'Neill Verner Award, the "highest honor the state gives in the arts". Having been one of the key players of one of the top ten colleges of Architecture in the nation, Acorn has come to influence many art majors and architects who now practice all over the US and abroad.

The following is an excerpt from the exhibition catalog by Luke Delello, "Trailer nails, plywood, aluminum sheet metal, all common products found at any hardware store, are the key materials John Acorn used to craft the three series presented in this exhibition: *Profiles*, *Camouflage Men*, and *Reflections on the 20th Century*. The humility of these materials is no accident, and their supposed simplicity is precisely the source of their thematic power."

"The human profile has preoccupied artists for millennia, from Egyptian

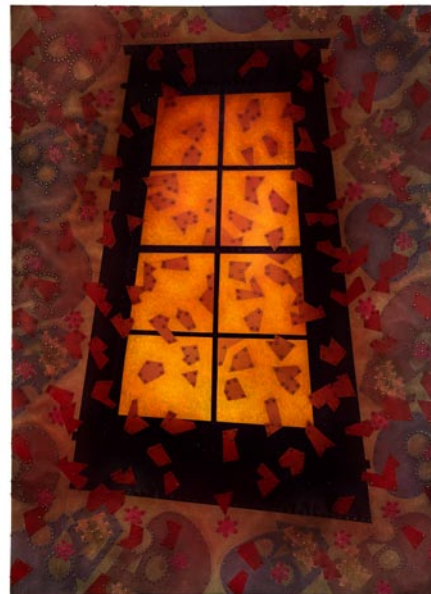


John Acorn, "Profile and Right Angle", c mid 1970's, Wood, Aluminum, 24 1/2 x 13 x 20 inches

hieroglyphs to Victorian silhouettes. In *Profiles*, Acorn celebrates the rich heritage of this subject by using a single cutout of a female profile to craft a wide-ranging series. "Profile and Pyramids" stands on a ziggurat while being cradled by two more, and "Split Profile" modernizes the ancient Roman statues of Janus. "Chess Queen", has a High Medieval feel about her, while "Profile and Hair"'s flapper bob looks like it belongs in a roaring 20's executive suite. Bringing us to the modern era, the curved plywood lines of "Splayed" give the impression of a blurred photograph where the subject spun their head just as the shutter clicked."

"Moving from the female head to a headless human form, John's *Camouflage Man* series had a mundane origin: an advertisement in an Anderson newspaper for a camouflage hunting suit. This image got John thinking about the uses of continued above on next column to the right

camouflage in nature. Prey use it to hide. Predators use it to hunt. These figures raise difficult questions about how our human societies engage in complex games of hide and seek, some benign and some deadly. At the base of it all is a recognizably human form, but which do we see first? The human? Or the overlaid disguise? Most terrifying of all is the ways in which societies can create structures of injustice to camouflage the humanity of entire people groups. It is no coincidence that John reused the human form he developed for *Camouflage Man* in his series depicting the prison decks of American slave ships."



John Acorn "Kristallnacht", Painted Metal over Wood, 66 x 48 x 1 5/8 inches

"History both lived and inherited is one of the key preoccupations of Acorn's career. Born in the 1930s, John bore witness to the majority of the 20th century. In *Reflections* he grapples with historical events from the War in the Pacific to the Berlin Wall. John's connection to these events is often personal. When he was six years old, his sister's boyfriend returned from the Pacific Theater with a photograph of the freshly stacked skulls of Japanese soldiers. John couldn't sleep for days. Decades later when John was completing



John Acorn "South Pacific II", Painted Metal over Wood, 66 x 48 x 1 5/8 inches

a post-graduate residency at the esteemed Hochschule für Bildende Künste in what was then West Berlin, he approached and touched the Berlin Wall with his hand, before quickly backing away as an East German machine gun was trained at him from the guard tower."

"This tactility of history is fundamental to Acorn's work. See how he sums up the horrors of "Kristallnacht" in a single window breaking. John assures me that each shard could be put together like a puzzle to precisely fill the empty panes. This care and attention to detail is central to the terrifying historical events the *Reflections* are grappling with. The Holocaust ran like clockwork. Those Japanese skulls were stacked just so. The same hardware John used to build his 20th Century panels were used to construct the death camps in Europe and Southeast Asia. Concrete and steel can quickly cut a European city in half, or they can be cast into a sculpture that grows in grandeur as it weathers. In this way Acorn's work serves as a celebration and a warning. Given the same building materials, what world will we construct in the 21st Century?," ended

[continued on Page 17](#)